United Nations S/2016/675

Security Council

Distr.: General
2 August 2016

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2267 (2016), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) until 28 February 2017 and requested me to report every six months on the situation in Guinea-Bissau and on progress made in the implementation of the resolution and the mandate of UNIOGBIS. The report also provides an update on key political, security, human rights, socioeconomic and humanitarian developments in Guinea-Bissau since my report of 12 February 2016 (S/2016/141).

II. Major developments in Guinea-Bissau

A. Political situation

2. Since my previous report, the political situation in Guinea-Bissau has deteriorated. Following the decision on 15 January 2016 by the Permanent Commission of the National Assembly to remove the parliamentary mandate of 15 Members of Parliament, parliamentary work has ground to a halt. The 15 Members of Parliament had been expelled from the ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde (PAIGC) for abstaining from voting on the Government's programme during the first ordinary session of the Assembly.

3. On 24 February, President José Mário Vaz circulated a draft political agreement aimed at ensuring stability until the end of the current parliamentary term. The agreement provided for the reversal of the decision by the Permanent Commission and a commitment by the signatories to abandon ongoing legal actions. PAIGC offered an alternative agreement that focused, inter alia, on institutional strengthening, reforms and a commitment to respect judicial decisions. Neither proposal was adopted by the National Assembly.

4. On 7 March, during its one-day visit to Guinea-Bissau, the Security Council called upon President Vaz to engage the country's key political stakeholders in dialogue and to promote respect for the laws and Constitution of the country. The

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Council also encouraged Prime Minister Carlos Correia, Cabinet members, the Speaker of Parliament, PAIGC and the opposition Party for Social Renewal (PRS) to similarly engage in inclusive and constructive dialogue to ease persistent tensions between national authorities. The Council's messages were reiterated by the former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, who visited Bissau on 2 May in his capacity as the Special Envoy of President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria for Guinea-Bissau and on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

5. The Peace and Security Council of the African Union also conducted a mission to Guinea-Bissau from 16 to 21 March, with the objective of assessing the situation in the country and identifying ways to contribute to the resolution of the political crisis. The delegation held consultations with President Vaz, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister, Cabinet ministers, the Secretary of State for Public Law and Order and the Attorney General. They also met with representatives of political parties and civil society organizations, including religious leaders. The delegation reiterated the availability and readiness of the African Union to support national stakeholders in their efforts to find a lasting solution to the crisis and encouraged them to exercise restraint, uphold the country's interest and engage in dialogue to resolve political differences.

6. On 4 April, the Supreme Court of Justice declared that the decision of the Permanent Commission of 15 January was unconstitutional on the basis that it violated the immunities granted to a Member of Parliament and was made by the Permanent Commission at a time when it did not have the legal authority to do so. On 19 April, in an address to the nation delivered at the National Assembly, President Vaz called upon the National Assembly to resume its regular functioning. He also stressed the need to identify solutions to the crisis within the parliamentary framework and ruled out the possibility of dissolving the National Assembly.

7. On 3 May, the third ordinary session of the National Assembly was convened. However, it was adjourned on the same day owing to divisions among Members of Parliament over the agenda and status of the 15 former PAIGC Members of Parliament. Consultations among the parties represented in Parliament proved to be inconclusive up until the end of the parliamentary session on 14 June.

8. On 4 May, the Regional Court of Bissau issued a decision invalidating the expulsion of Baciro Djá from PAIGC in November 2015. Mr. Djá had been expelled for allegedly breaching the party's rules and regulations by accepting the position of Prime Minister in August 2015. According to the Court, the process leading to his expulsion was illegal given that Mr. Djá had not been afforded the opportunity to appeal the decision before the party's competent organs. On 5 May, PAIGC appealed the Regional Court's decision.

9. On 9 May, President Vaz met with representatives of the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, ECOWAS, the European Union and the United Nations to discuss the ongoing parliamentary crisis. The President indicated that he had decided to initiate new consultations with all parties represented in Parliament to find a solution to the crisis. He appealed to international partners to exert influence by, inter alia, emphasizing the importance of compliance with judicial decisions. International partners called for patience and restraint to prevent the crisis from deepening. They also requested the President to use his good offices to address the labour strikes that had been affecting the country's health and education sectors since March.

10. On 11 May, the Council of Ministers issued a communiqué expressing serious concern about the political stalemate, denouncing the President's inability to promote dialogue and blaming him for the "climate of misunderstanding" in the National Assembly.

11. Addressing the nation for a second time, on 12 May, President Vaz indicated that it had not been possible to resolve the stalemate in Parliament, notwithstanding all national and international mediation and dialogue efforts. He explained that in accordance with the Constitution, he could request the Prime Minister to reshuffle the Government, dissolve the National Assembly or dismiss the Government and appoint a new Prime Minister to form a new cabinet. He had decided to opt for the dissolution of the Government. He also called upon trade unions to suspend their strikes, given the "inability" of the Government to fulfil its obligations. Hours after delivering the address, the President issued a decree dismissing the Government of Prime Minister Correia. The presidential decree marked the third change in Government since the general elections in 2014. On the following day, President Vaz initiated consultations with political parties represented in Parliament during which he requested them to present proposals for a new Government that would guarantee stability until the end of the current parliamentary term.

12. On 16 May, PAIGC submitted its proposal to the President, in which it suggested that the new Government be composed of representatives from political parties, both within and outside the Parliament, and that 2 of the 33 ministers and secretaries be appointed by the President. The proposal included a draft parliamentary stability agreement, a pledge to work on political and social stability pacts and details of a proposed structure to facilitate inter-institutional dialogue. In a press release issued on 17 May, the President rejected the proposal, stating that it failed to provide concrete solutions to the impasse. He also noted that the Constitution did not give him the authority to propose or suggest individual members of Government as outlined in the PAIGC proposal.

13. On 18 May, in a meeting at the National Assembly, PAIGC, the Union for Change and the Democratic Convergence Party signed the parliamentary agreement proposed by PAIGC. The New Democracy Party, which holds one parliamentary seat, was present at the meeting but did not sign the agreement. PRS did not attend the meeting.

14. On 19 May, President Vaz met with the leaders of the five parties represented in Parliament to discuss the appointment of a new Prime Minister. The three signatories to the PAIGC agreement reiterated that the new appointee had to come from PAIGC given that it was the party that had won the most seats in the legislative elections. PRS stated that it was expecting a resolution to the impasse to come from either the President or PAIGC. On 21 May, President Vaz announced that he had requested PRS to present its proposal to guarantee governmental stability. The party reportedly complied with the request of the President; however, its proposal was not made public. On 26 May, the President issued a decree, once again, appointing Baciro Djá as Prime Minister. He was sworn in as Prime Minister on 27 May.

15. The appointment triggered a political and security stand-off during which the dismissed Prime Minister and Cabinet ministers refused to vacate government offices. On the preceding day, 26 May, in protest over the President's decision to appoint Mr. Djá as Prime Minister, PAIGC supporters demonstrated in front of the presidential palace, burning tires and throwing stones.

16. On 27 May, PAIGC issued a communiqué alleging that the presidential decree did not comply with the Constitution and the Supreme Court's decision of 8 September 2015, which had declared the appointment of Mr. Djá as Prime Minister in August 2015 as unconstitutional. On the same day, I expressed my deep concern about the situation in the country and urged all political stakeholders and their supporters to refrain from violence and settle their differences through dialogue. I also called upon all political actors to urgently bring the impasse to an end in compliance with the Constitution and urged the armed forces to continue to act responsibly.

17. On 28 May, the deposed Cabinet issued a communiqué rejecting the presidential decree appointing Mr. Djá as Prime Minister and stating that only PAIGC was constitutionally allowed to nominate the Prime Minister and form a Government. On 30 May, the President of PAIGC and former Prime Minister, Domingos Simões Pereira, held a press conference in which he called upon the international community not to let instability continue in Guinea-Bissau.

18. As part of the efforts of civil society to defuse tensions, on 1 June, the Catholic bishops of Guinea-Bissau launched an appeal to political leaders to create conditions conducive to dialogue and a strategic partnership among State institutions. They also called for political actors to develop a stability pact to restore effective governance. On 2 June, a delegation from the Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union completed a six-day visit to Bissau to assist national stakeholders to resolve the political impasse. At the end of their mission, they called upon national actors to respect the Constitution and to use dialogue to resolve the crisis. On the same day, the Cabinet of Prime Minister Djá, which consists of 19 Ministers and 12 State Secretaries, including 4 women, was sworn in by President Vaz. On 3 June, PAIGC petitioned the Supreme Court of Justice to request the enforcement of its ruling on 8 September 2015 against the appointment of Mr. Djá.

19. On 4 June, the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government held its forty-ninth ordinary session in Dakar. Prime Minister Djá attended the summit on behalf of President Vaz. The ECOWAS Authority decided to extend the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) by one year and committed to sending a high-level delegation consisting of the Presidents of Guinea, Senegal and Sierra Leone to mediate the crisis in Guinea-Bissau. In addition, the Authority requested the ECOWAS Commission to consult with the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries to convene a meeting of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau in their capacities as co-chairs of the Group.

20. On 9 June, following intense overnight negotiations involving religious leaders, ECOMIB and UNIOGBIS, the remaining members of the dismissed Cabinet and their supporters voluntarily and peacefully vacated government offices, ending a 14-day stand-off. Earlier that day, international partners in Guinea-Bissau issued a joint communiqué expressing their support for a peaceful solution to the impasse.

21. Also on 9 June, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union considered the situation in Guinea-Bissau during its 604th meeting. In a statement issued after the meeting, the Peace and Security Council recalled its mission to the country in March and noted that, notwithstanding numerous mediation efforts, divisions among the main political authorities had deepened. It appealed to President Vaz to promote adherence to the Constitution.

22. On 15 July, the Supreme Court issued a decision declaring that the appointment of Prime Minister Djá and his Cabinet was not unconstitutional. The decision was reached by a majority of seven against three judges. During a press conference on 16 July, PAIGC expressed its strong disappointment but stated that it would respect the decision.

23. From 23 to 25 July, my Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs visited Bissau. He met with the President, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister and the President of the Supreme Court, as well as with representatives of political parties and civil society. He conveyed my message to all political stakeholders to put aside their differences and to focus on inclusive political dialogue and reaching a consensual solution.

B. Security situation

24. The overall security situation in Guinea-Bissau remained calm despite the tense political climate, with few reported incidents. On 3 March, during a military ceremony in Bissau attended by senior officers and international partners, the Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces, Lieutenant-General Biaguê Na N'Tan, stated that he was aware of attempts to co-opt military personnel to overthrow the Government. He warned that any military officer involved in such attempts would be severely punished and reaffirmed the military's zero tolerance for insubordination and interference in political affairs.

25. On 25 May, about 250 military personnel representing the army, the air force and the navy carried out an unprecedented peaceful march in the streets of the capital city of Bissau. They were unarmed and dressed in sports clothing. The marchers carried large banners with slogans pledging non-interference in the political affairs of the country.

C. Human rights situation

26. The human rights situation in Guinea-Bissau remained largely unchanged, with no gross human rights violations reported. However, there was no substantial progress in addressing serious violations from the past. Reported human rights violations and abuses included multiple instances of gender-based violence, limited access to health and education services and arbitrary and illegal arrest and detention.

27. Human rights violations perpetrated by the police continued. On 4 May, four police officers were convicted by the Bissorã Regional Court for beating to death a detainee who had been found dead on 5 July 2015 at the Bissorã police station in the Oio region.

28. As a result of the political crisis, efforts to implement the recommendations of the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council of 23 January 2015 and of the National Conference on Impunity, Justice and Human Rights held in July 2013 were delayed.

29. In a positive development, on 16 May, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs formally notified UNIOGBIS that Guinea-Bissau had acceded to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and the 1998 Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.

D. Social, economic and humanitarian situation

30. The prolonged political crisis has resulted in the suspension of crucial reforms, in particular regarding fiscal sustainability, thereby putting at risk the gains made in the immediate post-electoral period. During a mission to Guinea-Bissau from 22 to 28 June, representatives of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) indicated that the economic growth recovery of 4.8 per cent recorded in 2015 would continue in 2016 if certain conditions were met, including the receipt of much-needed revenues from the cashew nut harvest. As at June, 137,000 tons of the targeted 200,000 tons had been harvested and sold at the market price of CFAF 350 per kilo.

31. Financing of the national budget remains a challenge, in particular following the suspension of budgetary support by the African Development Bank, the European Union and the World Bank in the first quarter of 2016. The budgetary support provided by those institutions amounted to an estimated $40 million, or about 30 per cent of the national budget. The suspension followed the decision by IMF to delay disbursements to Guinea-Bissau, inter alia, because of the bank bailout undertaken by the Government in July 2015, which transferred private debt to the State's accounts. The resumption of IMF disbursements will depend on progress made in reversing the bank bailout and the adoption of a national budget for the remainder of 2016. In April and June, the Government issued treasury bonds amounting to CFAF 13 billion for the servicing of domestic debts and to cover some operating costs.

32. In this complex situation, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes have continued to work with State institutions and development partners to support the delivery of key services, such as maternal and child health care, education and food security-related activities. Examples include the resumption of education services, with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), after a six-week strike by teachers in March and April and the provision of school meals by the World Food Programme to 118,000 primary schoolchildren in six of the country's eight regions.

33. On 17 June, the World Health Organization and UNICEF, in collaboration with the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, assisted the Ministry of Health in launching a nationwide integrated meningitis A, vitamin A and mebendazole vaccination campaign. Efforts to improve maternal and child health care and to build local capacity continued, including through a health technicians' training initiative on anaesthesiology launched on 9 April by the Ministry of Health and the United Nations Population Fund. Moreover, in February, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provided emergency assistance to households affected by drought, in particular those facing acute food insecurity. Going into the lean season this year, from June to August, around 205,000 people will be food insecure, compared with more than 530,000 during the same period in 2015.

III. Status of implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

A. Inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation process

34. During the reporting period, the leadership of UNIOGBIS engaged with national and international partners to assess all stages of the evolving political crisis, explore options to resolve it and prevent a deterioration in the situation on the ground.

35. On 27 and 28 April, UNIOGBIS organized a workshop at the National Assembly in support of national efforts to promote stability in Guinea-Bissau. The then Prime Minister, Carlos Correia, the Speaker of Parliament, Cipriano Cassamá, a representative of President Vaz and my previous Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau, Miguel Trovoada, opened the event. The meeting brought together approximately 200 participants, including Members of Parliament, representatives of political parties, civil society organizations, academia and religious and traditional leaders. The participants identified several recommendations in three thematic areas: power relations among State institutions; measures to build trust among political actors and between the citizenry and State institutions; and mechanisms for monitoring and following up on agreements.

36. My current Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau and Head of UNIOGBIS, Modibo Ibrahim Touré, who arrived in Bissau in May, has been proactively engaging the key national actors, notably the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of Parliament and the President of the Supreme Court of Justice. He has also reached out to leaders of political parties and civil society, including women and youth organizations, as well as religious and traditional leaders. In his discussions, he continues to reiterate the full readiness of the United Nations to assist in building consensus among national stakeholders to arrive at a sustainable solution to the current political crisis. He also continues to underscore the repeated calls by the Security Council for a quick resolution to the political stalemate, based on inclusive dialogue and in compliance with the Constitution. In May and June, he mobilized international partners and consulted political parties to explore options for a peaceful solution to the standoff at the government offices.

37. From 7 to 9 May, UNIOGBIS organized a training workshop for the Organizing Commission for the National Conference and its facilitators in Bissau. The training was aimed at building facilitation capacity and transferring experience from national dialogue processes in other countries. Regional consultations involving 660 participants from civil society organizations, defence and security forces and traditional and religious leaders were held between 17 June and 3 July.

B. Strategic and technical advice and support to national authorities in implementing the national security sector reform and rule of law strategies

38. During the reporting period, UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team continued to work on the development of a joint United Nations rule of law strategy for the police, justice and corrections sectors. The process was facilitated by the Global Focal Point for the Police, Justice and Corrections.

39. From 15 to 24 March, UNIOGBIS assisted the National Defence Institute in implementing six regional workshops on civil-military relations. The workshops were attended by approximately 150 representatives of the military, law enforcement institutions and civil society organizations, including 22 women. Discussions and recommendations focused on the role of defence and security forces in national reconciliation, security sector reform and agricultural and livestock production by the military.

40. In May, in preparation for the planned socioeconomic reintegration of some 693 military and security personnel under a Peacebuilding Fund-supported project

on security and defence sectors reform, UNIOGBIS, FAO and the Ministry of Defence conducted assessment missions to five military agricultural fields in the northern, eastern and southern regions of Guinea-Bissau. The objective of the assessments was to evaluate needs for the establishment of farming schools.

41. On 16 June, the National Institute of Studies and Research, in partnership with UNIOGBIS, launched a comprehensive review of the 2006 national security sector reform strategy, which is expected to be completed by December 2016. The review involves senior State officials, the military, the police and the judiciary, as well as international experts on rule of law and security sector reform.

C. Support to the Government of Guinea-Bissau in the mobilization, harmonization and coordination of international assistance

42. During the reporting period, my current Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau and his predecessor closely coordinated their efforts in support of the country with international partners on the ground, including the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking countries, ECOWAS, the European Union, ambassadors representing members of the Security Council and other key bilateral partners to promote dialogue aimed at finding a political solution.

43. My Special Representative held meetings with former President Olusegun Obasanjo in Lagos, Nigeria, on 26 May; the Chairperson of the ECOWAS Commission, Marcel de Souza, in Abuja on 27 May; the ECOWAS Mediator for Guinea-Bissau, President Alpha Condé of Guinea, in Conakry on 31 May; President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita of Mali in Bamako on 2 June; and President Alassane Dramane Ouattara of Côte d'Ivoire in Abidjan on 9 June. He also held regular phone conversations with President Macky Sall of Senegal, in his capacity as ECOWAS Chairman, and met with representatives of Member States, the African Development Bank and the World Bank in Dakar on 20 May.

44. In those consultations, my Special Representative advocated for the continued engagement of the international community to minimize the adverse effects of the crisis and ensure the continued delivery of basic social services to the population. He also advocated with regional partners for the extension of the mandate of ECOMIB beyond 30 June.

45. On 4 June, my Special Representative travelled to Dakar to attend the forty-ninth ordinary session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government as part of the United Nations delegation led by my Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas. The good offices efforts of my Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau contributed to the maintenance of ECOMIB in the country beyond the expiration of its mandate and to commitments by ECOWAS to send a presidential mission comprising the Heads of State of Guinea, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

D. Strengthening democratic institutions and enhancing the capacity of State organs to function effectively and constitutionally

46. From 28 April to 4 August, UNIOGBIS assisted the National Institute of Studies and Research in holding six conferences to promote discussion and stimulate open dialogue on the country's sociopolitical realities. The themes addressed during the

conferences included the administration of justice, human rights and impunity, and reforms in the security, economic, education and health sectors. Approximately 80 participants from the civil service, defence and security forces, political parties, diplomatic corps, academia and the United Nations attended each of the conferences.

47. In May, as part of a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-funded project in support of public finance management oversight institutions, the Specialized Permanent Commission of Economic Affairs carried out missions in the regions of Gabu and Cacheu. The missions enabled the Specialized Commission to gather information on public finance management practices, strengths and weaknesses in the visited regions.

48. From 23 to 27 May, the Audit Court of Guinea-Bissau, with technical and financial support from UNDP, conducted a training course on auditing practices, norms and techniques, which targeted 32 professionals in the Audit Court and the Ministry of Finance. The training was part of United Nations efforts to strengthen public finance management.

49. From 10 to 13 June, UNIOGBIS organized a workshop with civil society organizations, including youth and women's organizations, and women leaders, in support of outreach activities aimed at parliamentarians and preparations for the National Conference on peace and development in Guinea-Bissau. The workshop enabled 20 participants from the regions of Quinara and Tombali to discuss issues affecting their regions, receive training on communication, lobbying and advocacy and produce a report with recommendations to be submitted to Members of Parliament and the Organizing Commission for the National Conference. The initiative will be replicated in other regions throughout 2016.

E. Strategic and technical advice and support for the establishment of effective and efficient law enforcement and criminal justice and penitentiary systems

50. During the reporting period, UNIOGBIS continued to provide technical assistance to national authorities for the development of strategies and plans to effectively tackle organized crime, counter-terrorism and violent extremism and strengthen national border management capacity.

51. From 22 February to 15 March, UNIOGBIS provided comprehensive training on the integration of gender-responsive perspectives into security institutions to 51 law enforcement officers, including 20 women, in the regions of Cacheu, Bafatá, Bolama and Bissau.

52. From 29 March to 11 April, expanding its community-oriented policing methodology, UNIOGBIS distributed model police station manuals to Public Order Police structures and local authorities in every region of Guinea-Bissau. A total of 119 senior Public Order Police officers, including 12 women, were targeted during the distribution process. On 18 May, the Government of New Zealand agreed to fund a model police station project in the Quinara region. The project will focus on demilitarizing policing approaches and expanding community-oriented policing.

53. From March to June, UNIOGBIS assisted national authorities in developing a five-year strategy for the penitentiary sector. The strategy is expected to provide a

tool for partnership and resource mobilization for the prison sector and enable better delivery in the criminal justice system.

54. Between 11 and 15 April, the UNIOGBIS regional office in Buba, Quinara region, supported the establishment of a regional forum on rule of law and security governance. The forum was attended by 55 participants, including seven women, representing local authorities, civil society organizations, defence and security institutions and community and religious leaders.

55. On 21 and 22 April, UNIOGBIS assisted the Ministry of Internal Administration and the Secretary of State for International Cooperation and Communities in organizing a conference on maritime security on Bubaque Island, in the Bijagós archipelago in the Bolama region. In the margins of the event, my former Special Representative officially opened the UNIOGBIS Bubaque regional office, which will assist national authorities in tackling drug trafficking and transnational organized crime and in enhancing border and maritime controls.

56. During the reporting period, UNIOGBIS continued its work on environmental crimes and abusive exploitation of natural resources by publishing a compendium of policy and analytical documents entitled "Reflections on Environmental Criminality in Guinea-Bissau". The compendium, which addresses criminal justice priorities in response to wildlife and forest crime, was distributed at key events, including a workshop on Bolama Island, in the Quinara region, in May, attended by 60 participants from environmental institutions, the criminal justice system and civil society.

57. On 30 May, UNIOGBIS conducted capacity-building activities for national law enforcement officers on support to victims of sexual and gender-based violence. The activities, which targeted 64 participants, were carried out in the Cacheu, Bafatá, Bissau and Quinara regions, with the involvement of UNIOGBIS regional offices.

58. During the first quarter of 2016, UNDP provided technical and financial support to the National Judiciary Training Centre. The Centre provided training on penitentiary law, human trafficking and border crimes to strengthen the capacity of judiciary operators.

59. As part of United Nations efforts to contribute to the building of the justice system in Guinea-Bissau, during the period under review, sector courts were jointly built by the Ministries of Justice and Public Works in the towns of Mansoa and Canchungo in the Oio and Cacheu regions, with the assistance of UNDP.

F. Promotion and protection of human rights and human rights monitoring and reporting activities

60. During the period under review, notwithstanding intense efforts by UNIOGBIS, the country's National Human Rights Commission remained non-compliant with the Paris Principles, notably the principle of independence of human rights institutions. That, in turn, has inhibited the effective monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations of the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council and those of other human rights bodies. Additionally, UNIOGBIS has encountered difficulties in supporting the Government in moving forward with its national human rights action plan owing to the ongoing political crisis.

61. UNIOGBIS continued its human rights monitoring activities during the reporting period. Assessments were conducted in the penitentiary sector, specifically in the Bissalanca air force base military detention facilities in Bissau and the detention centres of the Public Order Police and the Judiciary Police in Bissau, Mansoa and Bafatá in the Bissau, Oio and Bafatá regions. In March, UNIOGBIS submitted a report with findings and recommendations to the Government, noting that there had been no improvement in the living conditions of detainees and judicial process since 2014. To date, there has been no Government follow-up on the recommendations.

62. Between 25 February and 17 March, UNIOGBIS conducted human rights monitoring missions in the most remote regions of the country, including in Quinara, Tombali and Bolama-Bijagos. The key issues identified were limited access to basic social services, gender inequality, inadequate protection of children and gender-based and domestic violence. The mission also found that the lack of State attention to those regions has resulted in widespread impunity, minimal access to justice and poor detention facilities for convicted criminals.

63. UNIOGBIS also continued to raise awareness on human rights through technical advice, advocacy, capacity-building, sensitization and training campaigns, and the conduct of a radio programme targeting State actors, women, youth and civil society networks, academic institutions and traditional leaders.

64. From 21 to 23 March, UNIOGBIS carried out human rights sensitization campaigns in the Bafatá region, in partnership with the UNDP-supported Centre for Access to Justice, civil society networks and regional human rights associations. The campaigns brought together approximately 600 human rights practitioners and civil society representatives in round-table discussions on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular with respect to the issues of female genital mutilation, discrimination, domestic violence, child exploitation, and rape and other forms of sexual abuse. The purpose was to improve the human rights knowledge and skills of the participants to facilitate monitoring and accountability in the region.

65. UNIOGBIS designed and conducted human rights outreach training on a range of topics, including land ownership laws; a proposed bill regarding quotas for political participation of women; and methods for the identification of human rights violations. On 26 March, UNIOGBIS conducted grass-roots human rights training for 100 traditional leaders and civil society representatives, including 10 women, in the Cacheu region. The objective was to encourage compliance with human rights standards and national laws that enable the political empowerment of women. In April, training activities were also conducted in the regions of Quinara, Bafatá and Cacheu, targeting a wide group of local administrators, traditional leaders, security and defence personnel, journalists and youth representatives, including 34 women.

66. In February and March, UNICEF assisted the Ministry of Tourism and the Institute for Women and Children to strengthen the national framework for the protection of children from sexual exploitation, in particular in the tourism sector. A code of conduct for tourism sector professionals was developed to assist in preventing, identifying and referring cases of sexual exploitation of children in hotels and other tourist settings.

67. From 25 to 29 April, UNIOGBIS, in partnership with the National Judiciary Training Centre, held a training session on human rights and the administration of justice for 40 prosecutors, judges, lawyers, security officers, military magistrates and legal assistants of the Centres for Access to Justice, including eight women, in Bissau. The training focused on pretrial detention, criminal proceedings and due process of law.

68. In June, UNIOGBIS, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, facilitated the first-ever participation of Guinea-Bissau in a regular session of the Human Rights Council and in the high-level panel discussion on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Council. A representative of Guinea-Bissau also had the opportunity to be present in Geneva during the presentation of the report of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers on Guinea-Bissau in June. In the report on her visit (A/HRC/32/34/Add.1), the first conducted in Guinea-Bissau, the Special Rapporteur noted the challenges faced by the country in achieving judicial independence, which include corruption, impunity and limited access to justice. Guinea-Bissau has expressed its intention to review the recommendations contained in the report.

69. During the reporting period, UNIOGBIS finalized three separate human rights guides, for civil society, persons deprived of their liberty and the armed forces. The guides will be used to raise awareness and enhance the knowledge of target populations about international, regional and national human rights protection mechanisms.

G. Strategic and technical advice and support to the Government of Guinea-Bissau to combat drug trafficking and transnational organized crime

70. The ongoing political crisis has contributed to a further weakening of the capacity of State institutions to devise and implement effective measures to combat drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. Nonetheless, during the reporting period, the Judiciary Police was able to detect and report on the presence of high-level drug traffickers in the country and drug-trafficking activities.

71. As at late April, according to evidence provided to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, there was a 50 per cent increase in drug seizures by the Judiciary Police and the Transnational Crime Unit in Bissau compared with 2015. By May, as a result of proactive investigations, based on intelligence gathered by the Crime Unit in partnership with the Judiciary Police, 50 cases of drug trafficking had been investigated, with 63 persons prosecuted and 36.265 kilos of cocaine and 216.96 kilos of marijuana seized. This was also due to the training provided to airport security personnel by international experts with the financial support of the European Union. The training helped to improve national capacities to detect the illicit inflow of people and goods through the Bissau airport.

72. Through a European Union-funded project implemented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, a functional drug laboratory was established in Bissau in May. The lab has enabled the use of qualitative analysis of cocaine and cannabis in criminal justice proceedings. On 6 June, one drug trafficker was convicted based on scientific analysis conducted by the drug laboratory.

73. During their joint monitoring of criminal investigation reports and court hearings, UNIOGBIS and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime found that, although investigations seemed to have been carried out in a proper manner, law enforcement officers could not always follow through on the outcome of investigations due to concerns over their personal security.

74. During the reporting period, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime provided operational and logistical support to the Transnational Crime Unit in Bissau, including vehicles, communications equipment and fuel. The Office provided training to the Unit, in partnership with UNIOGBIS. Additionally, bilateral and multilateral partners, including Austria, Japan, Portugal, Spain, the United States of America, the European Union and the Peacebuilding Fund, contributed to the functioning of the Unit. Between 21 and 23 March, UNIOGBIS assisted the Office in delivering anti-terrorism training in Bissau for 25 law enforcement and internal security officers, including four women. Participants analysed emerging global, regional and national threats and discussed mainstreaming approaches to counter-terrorism, including early warning and preventive measures.

75. From 23 to 27 May, UNIOGBIS assisted the Office in delivering a training-of-trainers activity on operational planning and international drug trafficking investigation. Twenty-four law enforcement officers and magistrates, including three women, attended the training.

76. On 23 May, UNIOGBIS and the Office finalized plans with the National Guard to conduct a border assessment in order to strengthen internal security. In June, the two Offices facilitated the signature of a memorandum of understanding between the National Guard and the Judiciary Police to establish a common line of action in preventing and combating crimes.

H. Incorporating a gender perspective into peacebuilding, in line with Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008)

77. From 15 to 17 February, UNIOGBIS organized two workshops, in the regions of Bafatá and Quinara, on violence against women. Approximately 40 participants from each region participated. The objective was to raise awareness of the need to protect women from violence and to encourage gender equality. The workshops also enabled the dissemination of a report on political participation by women in decision-making processes.

78. On 8 March, as part of the International Women's Day celebrations, UNIOGBIS assisted the Government in organizing a ceremony chaired by the Minister of Women, Family and Social Cohesion in Bissau. The event brought together more than100 participants, primarily women, including members of the Government, leaders of civil society organizations and international partners. In her speech, the Minister stressed that Bissau-Guinean women continued to face many structural inequalities owing to cultural and social barriers. She also underlined that, without lasting stability, governmental efforts to eliminate discrimination against women would not result in significant progress.

79. From 15 to 17 March, in collaboration with the European Union, UNIOGBIS supported the National Network against Gender-Based Violence in preparing for an international conference on gender-based violence. Some 150 participants from all

the regions of the country, including representatives of the Ministry of Women, Family and Social Cohesion, members of civil society organizations and women leaders, attended the conference, which raised awareness on the importance of adopting mechanisms for the promotion of women's rights and gender equality and the combating of gender-based violence.

80. From 29 to 31 March, UNIOGBIS provided technical and financial support to the Association of Women Journalists for the organization of a three-day training workshop on gender equity in the media, which targeted 35 women media professionals. One of the objectives of the workshop was to design a communications plan to promote peace in Guinea-Bissau. Its main recommendations included the need to reinforce the capacities of journalists to report upon violations of women's rights and give more visibility to gender equality and women's rights in the local media and on the Internet.

81. On 25 and 26 April, UNIOGBIS trained 40 members of the Association of Women Journalists as well as journalists and security and defence officers on the content of the national law on domestic violence in the Cacheu region. Participants recommended the dissemination of the law in all regions, the strengthening of the capacity of law enforcement officials and magistrates, the development of community radio programmes, the reopening of courts in the country's sectors and the creation of a guest house for victims of domestic violence.

82. In May and June, UNIOGBIS organized training workshops for women's civil society organizations and women leaders on communication, advocacy and lobbying in the regions of Bolama, Gabú and Biombo. The workshop, which gathered 40 participants in each location, was designed to enhance their capacity to interact with State institutions and promote the adoption and implementation of the draft bill on quotas for political participation by women.

83. By the first quarter of 2016, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) had contributed to the strengthening of the capacity of 97 women on conflict resolution in the country's regions, in collaboration with the Government and civil society organizations. Additionally, UN-Women provided technical advisory services and financial support to civil society organizations to improve their contribution to the prevention and eradication of violence against women and advocacy for national dialogue and social cohesion.

I. Work with the Peacebuilding Commission in support of the peacebuilding priorities of Guinea-Bissau

84. On 12 February and 11 March, the Executive Commission of the Peacebuilding Fund in Guinea-Bissau, co-chaired by my former Special Representative and the Minister of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and Parliamentary Affairs, approved seven projects developed within the framework of the Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2015-2017, in partnership with UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team. They include projects aimed at supporting political dialogue and reconciliation and addressing inter-party and intra-party divisions. The implementation of three of the projects, amounting to $ 2.1 million, has already begun.

85. On 16 May, the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission issued a statement expressing concern about the continuing political

crisis in the country, acknowledging the role of the defence and security forces in respecting the rule of law and distancing themselves from the political arena and taking note of the effective, preventive and deterrent role of ECOMIB. The Commission also called upon the President and all other political actors in Guinea-Bissau to reflect on the consequences of the current political crisis on the country's economic and social development, and on the opportunities that Guinea-Bissau would miss if the current stalemate was not resolved swiftly.

86. On 9 June, my Special Representative provided an update to the Guinea-Bissau configuration on political developments and their implications for peacebuilding priorities. In a statement issued following the meeting, the Commission underscored its readiness to work closely with international partners and national stakeholders to refocus political and financial support for the country and facilitate the maintenance of international support to the most vulnerable populations.

IV. Cross-cutting issues

A. Integration of the United Nations system

87. On 28 April, the Government and my former Special Representative signed the Guinea-Bissau United Nations Partnership Framework for the period 2016-2020, in support of the implementation of the national strategic and operational plan for 2015-2020 ("Terra Ranka").

88. On 2 June, my Special Representative convened a meeting of the Strategic Policy Group, which comprises UNIOGBIS and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. Participants analysed and reviewed challenges and opportunities for United Nations assistance in the provision of basic services to the population in the light of the difficult political context.

89. The current situation in Guinea-Bissau demands innovative approaches, leveraging the resources and capacity of the United Nations system. The senior leadership of UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team is working to increase synergies and complementarity in addressing the country's political, security and development challenges.

90. Within the framework of the Global Focal Point for Rule of Law, UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team are developing a joint programme to support reforms in the justice and security sectors, including their modernization. From 6 to 23 February, a mission from UNDP on behalf of the Global Focal Point worked with the country team to develop a draft strategic vision. As a result, a United Nations joint programme is being finalized for implementation to begin by the end of the year.

91. In order to better respond to the current situation, the United Nations country team and UNIOGBIS, through their joint coordination mechanisms, are preparing a priority strategy to ensure that the United Nations Partnership Framework workplan contributes to the continued delivery of basic services, build resilience at the local level, and promote initiatives towards sustainable development.

B. Public information

92. During the reporting period, UNIOGBIS continued to disseminate information on the good offices of my Special Representatives and United Nations activities through various channels, including social media and the mission's website. In addition, UNIOGBIS produced and broadcasted 20 radio programmes on the national radio station and 27 community radio stations across the country. The programmatic themes included political dialogue, conflict prevention, reconciliation, human rights, environmental sustainability, the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations Partnership Framework, the mandate of UNIOGBIS, the rule of law and security sector reform.

93. In May, UNIOGBIS strengthened its field presence by deploying specialized media expertise and equipment to its regional offices in Bafatá, Buba and São Domingos, in the Bafatá, Quinara and Cacheu regions.

C. Staff safety and security

94. During the period under review, the overall security situation in Guinea-Bissau remained calm but politically tense owing to the persistent political crisis. Moreover, in keeping with trends in the West Africa region, terrorist threats increased in Guinea-Bissau.

95. Only a few incidents involving or affecting United Nations staff members were reported, including one house burglary, the theft of an official laptop and one minor road traffic accident. In response to continued reports of terrorist threats in the subregion, preventive measures were put in place at United Nations premises and staff members were reminded to remain cautious and vigilant.

V. Observations

96. I remain deeply concerned about the prolonged political crisis in the country, which is affecting the functioning of State institutions, the implementation of key reforms outlined in the country's strategic and operational plan for 2015-2020 and the delivery of basic services to the population. The people of Guinea-Bissau deserve better for their future than a repeat of past setbacks.

97. I strongly urge all political stakeholders, including the President, the Speaker of Parliament, the Prime Minister, PAIGC, PRS and other political parties to resolutely work to break the vicious cycle of instability and find a lasting and consensual solution to the current stalemate, through inclusive dialogue and in accordance with the Constitution and national laws. Continued respect for compliance with judicial decisions is essential and the interests of the people and the nation as a whole should be preserved and protected by all parties in legal disputes.

98. I welcome the professionalism of the armed forces and security institutions in the fulfilment of their duties and urge them to continue to act responsibly and within the law. I also encourage international partners to support national plans for the demobilization and rejuvenation of the armed forces.

99. I am encouraged by the coordinated and harmonized approach among international partners working towards a stable and prosperous Guinea-Bissau and call upon them to consider devising innovative strategies towards the delivery of social services to the people of Guinea-Bissau, whose living conditions have been greatly affected by the political impasse.

100. I commend all partners, including the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, ECOWAS, the European Union and regional leaders, for their continuous engagement in support of the country's peacebuilding challenges and encourage them to persist with their efforts to achieve peace and stability at this particularly delicate time. In that connection, I welcome the latest decisions of the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government on 4 June, in particular with respect to the extension of the mandate of ECOMIB for one year and the commitment to deploy a presidential-level mission to the country. I equally welcome the readiness of the European Union to provide financial support for ECOMIB operations.

101. I remain concerned about the continued fragility of the country's criminal justice system and the lack of progress made in investigating past gross human rights violations and creating related accountability mechanisms. I encourage national authorities to finalize the ratification of pending human rights instruments and reiterate my calls to implement the recommendations of human rights mechanisms, including the recommendations of the universal periodic review (2015), the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2013) and the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights (2015) and the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers (2016).

102. The national reconciliation process is seeing some progress at the grass-roots level in response to persistent calls for truth and justice. I strongly urge the leaders of Guinea-Bissau to provide the necessary support to that process. I commend members of the international community who have already lent their assistance and encourage others to follow suit.

103. The threats posed by the continued presence of perpetrators of transnational organized crime, drug traffickers and terrorist organizations in the country are real and require increased and coordinated efforts by the United Nations and other international partners to assist national authorities in developing effective countermeasures. Those efforts should also be geared towards tackling drug trafficking as a source of funding for terrorism in the subregion and beyond.

104. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to my new Special Representative, Modibo Ibrahim Touré, and the staff of UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team under his leadership, for their commitment and hard work. I am grateful to my former Special Representative, Miguel Trovoada, for his leadership and dedication to Guinea-Bissau, which helped to keep the country on the international agenda and mobilize political and financial support. I also express my appreciation to bilateral, regional and international partners for their continuing contributions to peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau.